

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7727

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, CASC (LESCH, ANN)

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL OF QUAKER REPRESENTATIVE

1. AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE (AFSC) HEADQUARTERS IN PHILADELPHIA HAS INFORMED ANN LESCH, ITS LOCAL "QUAKER INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE," THAT ISRAELI CONGEN NEW YORK ON FEB 13 ADVISED ITS NY REP THAT GOI WITNESSES HER "WITHDRAWN" FOR REPORTING ON "FAR LEFT AND RADICAL GROUPS". IN MEETING FEB 17 BETWEEN STEVE THIERNAN, HEAD OF AFSC INTERNATIONAL DIVISION, AND MICHAEL PRAGAI OF ISRAELI CONGEN NY, LATTER ALLEGED LESCH "MEETING AND REPORTING ON RADICAL ELEMENTS" WHICH HE DID NOT APPARENTLY FURTHER IDENTIFY. HE REPEATED REQUEST FOR "WITHDRAWAL" BUT AGREED MATTER COULD BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING PREVIOUSLY-SCHEDULED VISIT TO JERUSALEM IN LATE MARCH BY AFSC HEAD, LOU SCHNEIDER, AND AFSC ME DESK OFFICER MARY ARNETT, DURING WHICH THEY WOULD DISCUSS PROBLEM WITH MFA.

2. LESCH AND HUSBAND, JACK, HAVE BEEN IN JERUSALEM SINCE OCTOBER 1974. MAIN FUNCTION IS TO KEEP AFSC INFORMED OF OPINION AND DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, PARTICULARLY ON FOREIGN POLICY-RELATED ISSUES. THIS IS DONE THROUGH MONTHLY SUMMARIES OF ISRAELI (HEBREW & JERUSALEM POST) AND EAST JERUSALEM (ARABIC) PRESS AND OCCASIONAL SPECIAL REPORTS ON MEETINGS SHE HAS ATTENDED OR INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED. SHE HAS CONTACTS AMONG VARIETY OF ISRAELI GROUPS, RANGING FROM
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FAR RIGHT TO LEFT, AS WELL AS AMONG ARABS IN ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. SHE WORKS OPENLY, THOUGH DISCREETLY, AND TO OUR

KNOWLEDGE HAS ENGAGED IN NO RPT NO ILLEGAL OR IMPROPER ACTIVITY. REPORTS ARE LARGELY FROM PUBLIC SOURCES AND SIMILAR TO WHAT JOURNALIST MIGHT WRITE. SHE HAS PROVIDED US WITH LIST OF REPORTS, WHICH APPEAR UNEXCEPTIONABLE.

3. LESCH HAS HAD B-1 (TOURIST WITH WORK PERMIT) STATUS BUT VISA EXPIRED IN MID-JANUARY. APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL SUBMITTED BUT CANNOT BE ACTED UPON UNTIL RECEIPT OF AFSC LETTER RE FINANCIAL SUPPORT WHICH SHE HAS REQUESTED FROM HOME OFFICE. MEANWHILE SHE HAS 90-DAY PERIOD OF ADMISSION OBTAINED ROUTINELY UPON RETURN FROM VISIT OUTSIDE ISRAEL BUT THIS EXPIRES FEB 25. INTERIOR MINISTRY, WHICH APPEARS TO BE UNAWARE OF NY APPROACH, HAS INDICATED SHE SHOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM AND HAS GIVEN HER LETTER RE FACT APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF B-1 VISA PENDING.

4. ABOVE PROVIDED FOR YOUR INFO, AS WE UNDERSTAND THIERMAN INTENDS TO CONTACT DEPT. DO NOT BELIEVE ANY USG ACTION REQUIRED AT THIS STAGE, HOWEVER, PENDING RESULTS OF AFSC-GOI DISCUSSIONS DURING SCHNEIDER MARCH VISIT. FACT GOI HAS RAISED ISSUE THROUGH RATHER CIRCUITOUS ROUTE MAY INDICATE ITS HOPE AFSC WOULD ACQUIESCE WITHOUT PROTEST. SINCE AFSC APPARENTLY NOT PREPARED DO SO, PERHAPS GOI WILL DECIDE NOT PURSUE MATTER WHICH COULD GIVE RISE TO ADVERSE PUBLICITY.
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